

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 SCI-06 SAM-01 DRC-01 /120 W

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P R 261452Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 300

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY APRIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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USNATO FOR S/S

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR, US

SUBJ: SOVIET NEGOTIATOR RETURNS TO PEKING

REF: WARSAW 3570

1. PRAVDA PUBLISHES ON JUNE 26 BOTH THE TASS ANNOUNCEMENT OF  
DEPFONMIN ILICHEV'S RETURN TO PEKING FOR CONTINUATION OF SINO-  
SOVIET BORDER TALKS AND A 5-PARAGRAPH TASS SUMMARY OF LENGTHY  
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ZYCIE WARSZAWY ARTICLE ON SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS (REFTEL).

2. MOSCOW-BASED AMERICAN NEWSMAN TELLS US THAT PARIS "FRANCE SOIR" IN PAST FEW DAYS CARRIED ARTICLE BY VIKTOR LOUIS WHICH ASSERTS THAT RECENT VISITORS TO SINO-SOVIET BORDER ARE IMPRESSED WITH FEELING OF TENSION. LOUIS ALSO REPORTEDLY SAYS SOVIET PRESS HAS BEGUN TO ALLUDE TO 1969 BORDER INCIDENTS -- AN ASSERTION WE CONNOT CONFIRM FROM ANY RECENT PRESS MATERIALS.

3. COMMENT: WARSAW ARTICLE AND LOUIS PIECE APPEAR TO BE PART OF PROPAGANDA BARRAGE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT ILICHEV'S POSITION UPON RETURNING TO PEKING AFTER AN ABSENCE OF NEARLY A YEAR. ILICHEV UNDOUBTEDLY CARRIES SOME NEW SOVIET INITIATIVE AIMED AT DISPLAYING FORWARD MOVEMENT AND SOVIET REASONABILITY. TIMING IS CLEARLY RELATED TO U.S.-SOVIET SUMMIT. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT SOVIETS OFFERED PEKING A NUCLEAR NON-USE OF FORCE TREATY AND PROPOSED A SINO-SOVIET SUMMIT MEETING JUST AT THE TIME OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO U.S. LAST YEAR.

4. IF MOSCOW IN FACT COMES UP WITH A NEW PACKAGE, WE WONDER WHETHER PEKING WILL BE ANY MORE RECEPTIVE THAN BEFORE. CHINESE CONTINUE TO HOLD SOVIET HELICOPTER CREW THAT STRAYED INTO SINKIANG IN MARCH, DESPITE REPEATED SOVIET DEMARCHEs IN BOTH CAPITALS. POSITIVE MOVEMENT TOWARD RELEASE OF CREWMEN WOULD BE A GOOD SIGN, BUT IN ABSENCE OF SUCH GESTURE WE WOULD RATE ILICHEV'S PROSPECTS AS POOR. HIS RETURN TO PEKING NEVERTHELESS SHOWS THAT BREZHNEV FEELS COMPELLED AT THIS JUNCTURE TO KEEP UP AN ACTIVE EFFORT TOWARD NORMALIZATION WITH PEKING, ACHIEVEMENT OF WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS HAND BOTH AT HOME AND VIS-A-VIS THE U.S.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 JUN 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** garlanwa  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974MOSCOW10029  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740168-0643  
**From:** MOSCOW  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740612/aaaaajzy.tel  
**Line Count:** 91  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** WARSAW 3570  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** garlanwa  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 29 APR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <29 APR 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <24 JUN 2002 by garlanwa>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SOVIET NEGOTIATOR RETURNS TO PEKING  
**TAGS:** PFOR, CH, UR, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005